

Non-Subscribing Presbyterian

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Notes of the Month.

THE death of the Rev. Stopford Brooke last month called forth from the newspapers many numerous and appreciative notices of his character and work. Curiously enough, it passed unmentioned in some papers that when he seceded from the Church of England, it was to identify himself with Unitarianism. Yet that, surely, not only to us, but to others, was a notable transition, and one which spoke volumes for his strength of conviction. Both when incumbent of St. James's Chapel, and later when at Bedford Chapel, Bloomsbury, he was most popular as a preacher, and marked out for certain promotion in the Anglican Church. When, however, in response to theo-

logical conviction, he surrendered all his bright prospects and embraced the Unitarian faith, he showed himself to be a man of veracity and high-souled courage. Yet he has never ceased to have his admirers outside our own bounds. Whenever he preached at our Conferences or in any of our pulpits he was certain to attract large and appreciative congregations. His fine leonine head, his pulpit presence, his thoughtful utterance, and his exquisite sense of literary style, combined to make his sermons memorable. The pity of it was that his appearances were not more numerous than they were. Yet one has to remember that along with his work as preacher he did, perhaps, greater work as scholar and literary critic. In all probability some of his productions will survive his fame as a preacher. His "Life and Letters of Frederick W. Robertson," published as early as 1865, is familiar to, and greatly esteemed by, every lover of biography. His "Primer of English Literature" is a marvellous example of painstaking care and tasteful and terse expression. His sympathetic studies of poets like Browning and Tennyson have helped many readers to a truer understanding and appreciation of their genius. Granted a long life—he was eighty-four years at his death—he has made it fruitful in good works, and many of us esteemed him highly for his own and for his work's sake. Nor can we forget that Ireland claimed him for herself as one of her brilliant sons, he being born at Letterkenny, Donegal, and receiving his education at Trinity College, Dublin.

* * *

The above reference to Stopford

THE NON-SUBSCRIBING PRESBYTERIAN

Brookes' biography of Frederick Robertson of Brighton will, perhaps, remind our readers that the biographer has not long survived an interesting celebration, i.e., the centenary of the birth of Robertson. There are, perhaps, few, if any, examples of a preacher whose fame has proved so permanent as that of the man who, born as long ago as February 3rd, 1816, and dying before the completion of his thirty-seventh year in 1853, made his mark as perhaps the greatest pulpit power of his day. It says much for the catholicity and charm of his printed sermons, that they have found such a wide and varied circle of readers. Thoughtful men and women in every religious community have found them fruitful in suggestion, impressive in their appeal. Many sermons have their brief day and cease to be. Robertson's are still fresh and stimulating. Why is this? Chiefly because they are not concerned with the passing, but with the permanent aspects of human life, and the broader and deeper truths of the Christian faith. Evangelical and High Church Christians of his day found him hard to place—he did not fit their special framework, or speak their particular shibboleths. Avoiding the particular and dealing with the general, his word is abiding, his power permanent.

* *

In our February issue we made reference in this column to the growing articulate desire for Christian unity, as evinced especially in an interesting correspondence in the "Christian World." We return to that topic again, because of a very striking utterance thereupon by the President of the National Free Church Council. When the latter met for its Annual Meeting at Bradford, and elected to its highest position the Rev. J. H. Shakespeare, M.A., the latter delivered a Presidential address which was a passionate and eloquent plea for a United Free Church. It was his conviction that the Free Churches are at the cross roads; that the time has now come to sink differences, which at one time might have had significance, but which now are meaningless and highly mischievous.

Not content with criticism of a great and crying evil, he went on to point out the remedy. It was a Federation of Free Churches on the model of the States of America, i.e., there should be no absorption of one Church by another, and no amalgamation of different Churches, but a confederate union. The address, we are told, made a deep impression on those who heard it. More than that, it has been widely circulated since in printed form, and seems likely to yield striking results. We shall await the latter with interest and eager anticipation.

* *

An event of unusual and outstanding importance will be celebrated this month, viz., the Tercentenary of the death of William Shakespeare, one of those great world-writers who write not for an age but for all time. It is, perhaps, unfortunate that the date of his death, April 23rd, should fall on Easter Sunday, but that coincidence will not prevent even the churches from thinking of the great dramatic genius, whose works form the finest treasure-house of power and beauty ever evolved by the brain of one individual. But the celebration will accomplish its most fitting end if it impels many of us, not to talk about what Shakespeare was and did, so much as to re-read his greatest works. At a time when there is so much ephemeral literature, it is well worth our while to take up again Shakespeare's plays, which have so wonderfully stood the test of more than three centuries of time, and whose wide ranges of thought and feeling not even innumerable critics and commentators have as yet fully encompassed.

* *

In the "News-Letter" of February 26th "Interpreter" has given us another very good article on "The Failure of the Church." He says "the great need to-day evidently is to bring back religion into touch with life. . . . Life comes first, and it is for the purposes of life that religion exists. It is mistaken and misused when it has become an end in itself, apart from life

Between this conception of religion and that which generally prevails a wide gulf exists. Christianity cannot be deemed a failure where its place has been taken by a caricature."

* *

We Non-Subscribing Presbyterians could hardly have our ideas better expressed. This is what our Church has stood for for two hundred years. It is what it stands for to-day. Often the main issue has been obscured by controversy, but it has never been entirely lost sight of.

* *

The writer proceeds—"Everywhere, in the market-place, in the boardroom, in the teachers' classroom, there stands the altar upon which men may offer themselves, their souls and bodies, to the Unseen Power of the Higher Way. That many do this, and yet stand outside the organised Churches, is simply proof that organisation, or orthodoxy, is a sorry substitute for Christianity, since men, presumably self-interested, are not likely willingly to forego anything which can minister to their advantage."

* *

"The Churches have in the main endeavoured to minister to the needs of three classes. They have carefully tended the faithful, the orthodox; they have ministered, often with doubtful wisdom, to the poor; they have sent missionaries to the heathen. All this is to their credit; but these are not the only people to whom their services might be valuable. There are also intellectually needy souls, of whose cleverness they have frequently been afraid, whose doubts they have increased by scolding them." Alas! they have often punished them in the past, and are still inclined to scold them, as we too well know.

"There are others also millions in number, with whom they have failed in the past, as we are learning day by day from our experience in the great war. The Chaplain of the Fleet recently asked that no more tracts should be sent to men-of-war, because they were not appreciated. This was a courageous thing for a clergyman to do; but in these days sentiment, custom,

and prejudice must yield to efficiency, and his action implied that this time-honoured method of the Churches was no longer efficient; they speak a language and appeal to experiences which our sailors neither feel nor recognise. . . . The fact is that Christianity is largely off the rails, and when there is talk, as there is at present of the need of 'Special Missions,' 'Revivals,' we must first realise afresh, forgetting all our prejudices and habits, what are the real essentials of the Christian faith and life."

* *

"Interpreter" stops here, content to have emphasised the need for a more efficient exposition of the Christian religion. In Creed, Confession of Faith, and Catechism, the orthodox Churches give special attention to the birth and death of Christ and to theological opinions based chiefly on the writings of St. Paul, while they leave the life and teaching of Jesus comparatively untouched. Herein lies the great cause of their weakness and failure. When they place the life and teaching of the Master in the forefront, and give it the prominence and importance which they have hitherto given to other things, they will become more efficient instruments for good.



JESUS AND THE WAR.

It is constantly assumed that Jesus was specially distinguished in all the milder virtues, "meek and lowly were his ways;" but this is a view of his character founded on a few striking sayings, and not justified by the story as a whole. It is written that he looked "round about *with anger*" on those who watched whether he would heal on the Sabbath, and "he was moved to *indignation*" when the disciples kept the little children from him. There is nothing of mildness in his action when he drove the buyers and sellers out of the temple precincts, nor in his denunciations of the Scribes and Pharisees, fierce and repeated as they are; in the parables in which he sets forth with relentless severity the doom of the unmerciful servant, of the guest

who had not on the wedding garment, of the unfruitful tree, the unprofitable steward, of the husbandmen who slew their lord's son and heir. And though the words of the Prophet, "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter," are applied to him, it is not meekness but dignity which strikes us most in the record of his conduct, whether before the High Priest or the Governor. Very bold his confession before the hostile Sanhedrim, when the High Priest puts to him the question, on the answer to which his fate depends, "Art thou the Christ?" "And Jesus said, I am, and ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven." Nor otherwise his answer to Pilate: "Thou sayest it. I am a king;" and when Pilate would extort some show of deference from him by reminding him of the power of life and death the Governor possessed over him, how defiant is the reply "Thou could'st have no power at all against me except it were given thee from above."

And this side of the character of Jesus was fully recognised by those who after his death carried his gospel to the nations, as indeed it has been by all the Christian Churches ever since. They told of one who endured contradiction and the cross, who was despised and rejected of men, who bid the weary and heavy-laden come to him, because he was meek and lowly in heart, and, taking example of him, they would find rest, who took little children up in his arms, and spoke kindly words to the woman from whose touch the respectable shrank. But they also told of this same Jesus, now "sat down on the right hand of God, expecting till his enemies be made the footstool of his feet," how in that dread day of his coming "with power and great glory," as he had himself foretold, "all the tribes of the earth would mourn because of him," and the great and the strong of men hide themselves in caves and call upon the rocks and mountains to fall upon them and "hide them from the wrath" of him who on earth of old time seemed gentle as "a lamb" (Rev. vi. 15, 17). And

one who perhaps of all men knew him best, "the disciple whom Jesus loved and who lay upon his breast at the Last Supper," had he not seen him in vision of the last days, as Rider on the white horse, his eyes as a flame of fire and his garment sprinkled with the blood of his foes, leading the armies of heaven to the great last battle for God? Nor were they who first told of the humiliation and the triumph of the Christ, nor the millions who since have read the story and accepted it in humble faith, conscious of any inconsistency between the lineaments of the Jesus of the Gospels and this vision of heaven's champion, fierce to avenge the wrongs of a groaning world and mighty to establish on its ruins a kingdom of peace and righteousness. Rather did the one complete the other and together present the image of the Messiah of the prophets, the hope of all nations, the Saviour of Israel and of mankind.

Nor need we, whatever be our views of the authenticity and credibility of the sacred story, strive to tone down the portrait and adapt it to our ideal of what the Christ ought to be. Rather shall we cherish the belief in a Christ who was gentle and strong, serious and sociable, bold and humble, one "eaten up" with zeal for God, yet prudent and considerate for others, capable of anger and of pity, of scorn and tenderness, confident of divine mission and of ultimate triumph, yet prepared to stoop to the uttermost of humiliation and worst of deaths—a perfect, a whole man.

And this Christ, did he stand forth out of the dim and distant past and appear in England to-day, find us not a people weary and heavy-laden under a foreign yoke which no effort could relieve us of, but as yet strong and free and brave, at war with all our resources of men and money for the cause of God and right, would he not bid us call to mind the exhortation of Jehovah to another Jesus, on the borders of the promised land, "Have not I commanded thee?" Resolve on war: came it not from noblest motives? "Be strong therefore and of good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou

dismayed; for the Lord thy God is with thee!" (Joshua i. 9).

The radiant background of the Gospel story has faded with time, but the words and deeds of Jesus shine with a splendour, strong and vivid, which increases as the ages pass. Some are for special conditions and circumstances, some for all men of all times. We must needs understand if we would value them aright.—The REV. DR. HARGROVE, *Hibbert Journal* January, 1916.



CALLED UP.

BY ULLIN.

YEARS later, those who are spared will be sure to form a truer estimate of all that pertains to the greatest war in history, the reasons that led up to it, the methods by which it was conducted, and all the massacres and atrocities which followed in its train. Often enough there have been wars between nations—perhaps many of them might have been easily avoided—but the chivalry of arms ever exercised more or less a restraining influence, and combatants have been willing enough to shake hands after the fight and to make it up again.

But into the present war a new element has come—a psychological element, bringing into play combined, systematic forces of thought and feeling. Intense hatred has been advocated—the feeling fostered by skilful leaders of public opinion, and intensified by a "Hymn of Hate," taught even to little children in the schools; and with that malicious motive obsessing, but what a brief time ago was a truly great nation, depths of degradation have been descended to, which has, for the time being, obliterated the marks of true greatness, and we are confronted with "ruthlessness" and "frightfulness" and "Germany's duty to crucify humanity" to use the words of a Lutheran preacher recently reported. And, as in cases of individual delusions, such as we meet with from time to time, so in this great national delusion, at the root of it, there is no doubt

sincerity: the real genuine belief that these methods are the "short-cut" to the ultimate highest good.

Public opinion exerts enormous power at all times upon those living in the midst of it. Independent thought is a rare and difficult thing, and only among men who are "icebergs" can it ever be dissociated from feeling. The cheek of a judge has been seen to flush with anger as he detailed the crime in the words in which he passed sentence on a criminal, and surely if we look for dispassion anywhere it is on the judicial bench. However it may be explained an obliquity of mental vision like that which sees a straight stick bent in a pool has come upon the German people. We are only too familiar with the orations of the Kaiser, and his description of himself and his nation as the "Sword of the Lord." Intellect there certainly is highly trained and developed—marvellous organisation, tremendous courage; but in individuals these can be and often are the possession of criminals as much as of philanthropists.

The German nation has slipped into fostering the ideal of autocratic domination. In so doing it has put itself into opposition to the Power behind evolution, which is making for freedom and democracy. Thus suddenly upon the world has come "a day of judgment," a day of testing, a choice. Russia, autocratic in theory, has made what is surely a wise choice, confirmed by the visit of the Czar to the Duma, the sign of the turning point in Imperial policy, which recognises the value of freedom and the right of a people to representative institutions. Britain has bound the over-seas Dominions to herself by ties of love, instead of "chains of slavery." Alas! when will she extend the same justice to India? and on this very point Britain at this moment is as much on trial as Germany.

Voluntarily the call has been responded to by the majority of the young manhood of the British Isles; now a measure of compulsion has come, and in Great Britain there is no choice. Is there a single family at this time unaffected by that call? Wives,

mothers, sisters, fathers—they know as they have never known before what sacrifice is. And cheerfully, gladly facing discomforts and hardening themselves for the soldier's life, they have gone singing, with hearts rising above all troubles, nerved with high motive, for the thought with which the deed is done, is ever the "philosopher's stone," which turns dross to gold and makes the meanest work divine. Love of home, duty to country are sustaining thoughts to bear in mind, and steadier feelings than those of hate. But far greater even than these, more glorious, glorious with the glory of the Cross of Christ is the inspiration of Liberty for the World, the Redemption of the World from the tyranny that opposes itself to the Will of God. As some foul monster slumbering in its cave for ages, the dragon of "Might-is-Right," with its arrogance, cruelty, and thirst for blood, has once more come out into the light and filled the earth with the echoes of its bellowing. "St. George for Merry England," and with him "St. Andrew" and "St. Patrick," and "St. David"! Make a bouquet of the Rose, the Shamrock, the Thistle, the Daffodil, and the Lotus and the Maple, and tie it with a bond of love.

And we, who are left at home, to do our part here as much as those who have gone forth to battle will do theirs, we shall use our will-power to strengthen endurance in the hearts of the Allied Nations that they cease not till their task be accomplished, and pray that the Divine Will shall find in us clean and deep channels through which it may deign to flow.



FOREIGN MISSIONS.

BY "OBSERVER."

THE recent annual report of the London Missionary Society showed a grave deficit, and a warning was made to supporters that, under present conditions of finance, it would be impossible to maintain the same number of missionaries. Several missionaries would have to be withdrawn from the mission field, seventeen from India, and the

serious results as to aid given in education and in medical help to the natives, not to speak of the primary object of mission work, the preaching of the Gospel were detailed. There has naturally been great heart-searching as to reasons for this decline in the support of mission work, which at one time was unstinted. As one who seriously in youth thought of giving himself to missionary work, the subject of Foreign Missions, and also the work of the British and Foreign Bible Society, both of which are necessarily largely combined, have always had an unusual interest to the writer. There is a much more living interest in hearing from the lips of one who knew Burns, the first missionary to China, than of reading of him in books, and in early days that was the writer's privilege. Three names were closely associated—M'Cheyne, Chalmers, and Burns, and to the youthful listener they were made living characters by the one who spoke from personal acquaintance. Burns had scruples on the responsibility of "taking a fixed charge," the responsibility for souls, alas! too little felt, we are afraid, in these more latitudinarian days, weighed heavily on him. He was walking through the streets of Glasgow one night, and, as the crowds passed him, he thought how few of these could be saved, and so appalled was he that he could endure it no longer, but passed into a side street, and there pursued the line of thought. If in a land where the Gospel was preached so many must drop into hell, how about those vast millions away in foreign lands; how about China, where, so far as he knew, no tidings of salvation had ever been carried. But since then it has transpired that Jesuits sent their missionaries long before, and China, until she had occasion to become suspicious of the foreigner, gave courteous welcome and attention to the representatives of other religions. Of all this, however, Burns knew nothing, and even if he did, it would not have had much influence with him. It was to a hostile China he went, and the story of his work tells how he had to make himself into a Chinaman for the

Gospel's sake, and how daily and hourly his life was in jeopardy until he made his footing secure. Williams, the missionary to Madagascar, who died a martyr's death, the story of his work was heard by your writer in a lecture by his son, who was also a missionary. As for David Livingstone, who does not know and admire the work he did, although he was more successful as an intrepid explorer, opening up the Continent of Africa. He was under the auspices of the London Missionary Society. Of great interest too is the life of Livingstone's father-in-law, Robert Moffat, whom Dean Stanley invited to preach in the pulpit of Westminster Abbey. These are great names, and time and time again many a one has taken the opportunity to stand beside the slab of stone in the nave of Westminster Abbey and read the name, "David Livingstone," or look at his monument, which stands side by side with Sir Walter Scott in Prince's Street Gardens, Edinburgh.

We are very much advanced in our theology nowadays, and in these very pages, not long ago, we were told that the doctrine of endless torment had been decided against as a doctrine of the Church of England by the highest law court in the Empire. But if ever a reader of this Magazine has been gripped at any time, especially in the impressionable years of childhood, by this awful terror, then he will not think lightly of the brave pioneer missionaries who took on their arduous calling as though at a command ringing from heaven. We cheer the heroism of a fireman rescuing a child from a burning house, or of a soldier winning the V.C. by rescuing a comrade from the mouth of the hell of shot and shell. But this is only from bodily death, the pangs of which would only last a short time. But what of eternity? Thank God the horror has at last been broken up, like a dark cloud that has obscured the sun, even if it is not yet wholly dispersed. The writer, however, ventures to say that because of this the great motive in days gone by, having now been largely removed, there is not the same keenness on mission work. Yet another

reason is the growing conviction that because God is One, religion is one in essence the world over, and that forms of religion—whatever their name and place—are but great rays bursting through the clouds from one great Central Sun. The study of Comparative Religion is with constant new research and discovery growing in fascination. The British Empire contains every great religion in the world, and nothing can establish the foundations of Imperialism more securely than the glorious realisation of the Divine Unity in the midst of the Diversity of Religions.



BELFAST STANHOPE STREET DOMESTIC MISSION.

ANNUAL MEETING.



THERE was a good attendance at the above meeting, which was held in the Central Hall, Rosemary Street, on Monday, 6th March. Tea was served from 7-30 p.m., the arrangements being in the capable hands of Mrs. Harold Thomas. The chair was taken at 8 o'clock by Dr. John Campbell, and the proceedings were opened by Rev. H. J. Rossington with a Scripture reading and prayer. Reports were then presented from the General Committee, the Mothers' Meeting, the Provident Society, the Treasurer, and finally from the Missionary, Rev. Fred Woolley. The reports were all of a highly interesting and satisfactory character. In the course of his report Mr. Woolley referred, among other things, to the ever-increasing moral influence of the Mission, to the need for work amongst the soldiers' and sailors' families, and to the remarkable way in which the religious services and the various institutions of the Mission had maintained their attendances, despite the call which the war had made on the young life of the Church, and despite also the increasing attractiveness of questionable forms of popular amusement. "We never forget," he said, "that our work is principally religious and spiritual, and that while we interest ourselves in the outward life of the people, the

main object is to bring souls to Christ, and to extend the Kingdom of God." In this connection, the success of the Young Worshippers' League, which has as its main object the encouragement of church attendance among the young people, bears witness to Mr. Woolley's words. The charitable work of the Mission has been well maintained, and the report referred to the new scheme of the Charity Organization Society to prevent the overlapping of the granting of relief to casual applicants. One of the most hopeful features of the report was the fact, that not only has the Mission congregation contributed over £23 during the past year for the purposes of relief, etc., but several members of the Mission are rendering the Missionary invaluable service in his work, particularly in connection with the Band of Hope. The extent of the Missionary's personal activities can be imagined when we learn that he has, during the course of the year, paid over 1,200 visits—altogether a thoroughly interesting and hopeful report.

The Chairman formally moved the adoption of the reports and balance sheet, and called upon the Rev. W. H. Drummond, who, on the previous day had preached on behalf of the Mission in the First Church, Rosemary Street, and in All Souls'.

In seconding the adoption of the resolution, Mr. Drummond delivered a brief but stimulating address. He expressed appreciation of the work to which all the reports bore testimony, emphasising that work as a convincing justification of the faith in the future possibilities of the Mission manifested some years ago when the Mission's affairs were far less flourishing. Nothing could be more apparent in the present day than the need of such a mission as a centre of moral and spiritual influence. While the work of the Provident Fund was most useful and necessary, and while he claimed that still more might be done in that direction to encourage habits of thrift, he considered that the collectors accomplished even more, viz., the establishing of friendly relations with the

depositors, which told for incalculable good in the moral uplifting of their lives. Undoubtedly, the present war would be responsible for the rise of new temptations, against which the best safeguard would be the stronger and more religious characters nourished by the personal contact and care which a Domestic Mission existed to promote. He, therefore, rejoiced in the good accomplished, and wished for the Mission and its workers another year of increasing success and usefulness. A resolution, expressing appreciation of the work of Mr. and Mrs. Woolley was moved in appropriate terms by the Rev. G. L. Phelps. The seconder was Ald. Wm. Tougher, J.P., who testified to the excellent impression made upon himself by what he had seen of Mr. and Mrs. Woolley's work. The Rev. M. Watkins reminded his hearers of the claims upon their gratitude of the voluntary workers of the Mission, mentioning particularly the readiness with which Dr. Malcolm Brice Smyth had placed his medical skill at the service of the needy. Mr. Eustace Gordon seconded the resolution. The Rev. J. A. Kelly proposed the election of the Management Committee and the Ladies' Committee. Mr. W. H. M'Fadden seconded the resolution, and this, like the preceding resolution, was carried heartily and unanimously. Mr. C. J. M'Kisack expressed the thanks of the meeting to Dr. John Campbell for presiding, and the Rev. H. J. Rossington seconded, and also included in the vote of thanks Mrs. Harold Thomas, for taking charge of the tea. The pronouncing of the Benediction brought a very successful meeting to a conclusion.



DEATHS.

CHAMBERS—March 14th, at Tallynaskagh, Downpatrick, Ellen, widow of the late John Chambers, aged seventy-eight.

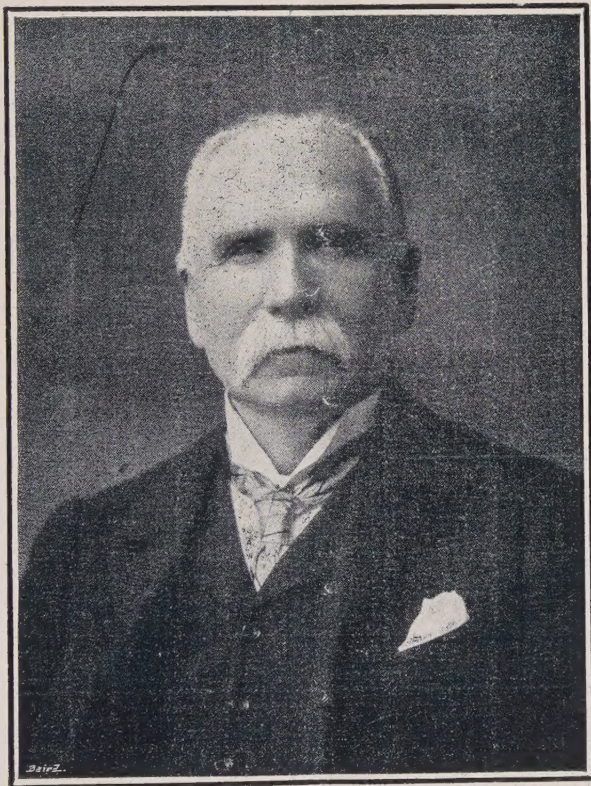
DARRAGH.—At the Ballymoney Infirmary, 20th March, in his ninety-first year, Samuel Darragh, of Ballaghmore, son of the late John Darragh. Buried on 22nd March in the Episcopal Graveyard.

Memorial Notices.

MR. JAMES DAVIDSON,
Windsor Park, Belfast.

By the death of the above, our religious community has lost a devoted member and a most generous supporter. Up to quite recent days the deceased was one of the most regular and interested attenders at the meetings of our body, serving on its committees

his grave by the Rev. H. J. Rossington, Minister of the First Presbyterian Church, Belfast, of which the deceased was a highly esteemed and most regular member, and in which he acted as treasurer of the congregation. Prior to his association with that particular congregation, he had been connected with Rademon and Comber congregations, and it was, perhaps, this which made Mr. Davidson take so wide and deep an interest in anything that



and contributing to its funds. It came as a great shock to many to learn of his illness and his subsequent death. So well did he bear the advance of age, and so clear was his mind, that we looked forward with confidence to a long continuance of his ever wise and considerate counsel. But that, unfortunately, was not to be. A heart attack terminated fatally on March 13th, and two days after the last sad rites were said over

touched the life of our Non-Subscribing community. Yet our Church affairs, much as they engaged his thought and prompted his beneficence, by no means marked the limits either of his activities or his generosity. The Domestic Mission possessed in him a most devoted and liberal supporter. With the work of the Royal Victoria Hospital he was very intimately and honourably associated, and when recently a much-

needed extension was made to its buildings, in the form of the King Edward VII. Memorial, he gave most generously towards its equipment and adornment. But, just as in Church affairs, he gave himself unsparingly, as well as his money, so likewise with the above Hospital or any other good cause he had at heart. Genial and good-hearted, he established that kind of connection which only personality can do. No one was better known or more heartily welcomed within the walls of the Hospital, whether he went to visit the patients in the wards or to attend, as he did so faithfully, the meetings of the Committee, and which he served as Chairman and as Treasurer for a long term of years. His genial presence and his generous support were known to other philanthropic concerns, and by them he will be greatly missed. His death called forth full and appreciative notices in the public papers, and from that of the "Northern Whig" the following biographical details were taken:—"The late Mr. Davidson and his relatives had long been associated with the Belfast district. He was the second son of the late Mr. John Davidson, of Drumaness, Co. Down, and married a daughter of the Rev. Samuel Nelson, a distinguished Minister in Downpatrick, and father of the late Dr. Joseph Nelson, of Wellington Place, Belfast, and of the late Mr. Omar C. Nelson, a well-known solicitor in Belfast, and a valued member of the Holywood Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Congregation. Early in life he went out to India, and was one of the pioneer tea planters in Assam." A man of great business ability, his work abroad proved most successful, and when he returned to the North of Ireland he continued to act as a director of two companies engaged in the tea business. Mr. Davidson is survived by one son, Mr. John Davidson, LL.B., who resides in Dublin as a Solicitor; and by two daughters, who resided with their father in Belfast. For his sorrowing relatives the deepest sympathy will be felt by all who knew and respected the deceased gentleman.

ARTHUR J. DAVIDSON.

At Ballywoollen House, Crossgar, on March 6th, there passed away Arthur J. Davidson, the only child of the late William Davidson, J.P., and of Mrs. Davidson. He was in the fifty-sixth year of his age, and had been an invalid for a considerable time before the end. After an apprenticeship to the law, for which he had no taste, he emigrated to India, and was there engaged for a number of years as a tea-planter. Returning home about eighteen years ago, he lived a retired life, and was not much known, unless by his intimate friends. He had undoubted ability as an inventor, and did some very clever work on machinery required in the linen industry. A warp-stop which he perfected had the merit of great simplicity, and enabled the worker to attend to an increased number of looms. In other directions he was equally successful, showing that he could easily have made a name for himself as an engineer. Although he was not closely associated with the activities of our denominational life, he was a generous supporter of all appeals on behalf of our churches which reached him. Never so well known amongst us as his respected father, he yet took an interest in everything which concerned the well-being of the congregations in his immediate neighbourhood. Deep sympathy will be extended to his aged mother, now left alone in her declining years.

MISS HUNTER, BALLYMONEY.

Miss Nancy Hunter, a straight, dignified striking figure, the outward form being symbolic of the developed character, has reached the point "where all must pause as is most meet for all." She had reached the 88th milestone on life's journey. Her father was the late James Hunter, of Ballywattick, and she was a sister of the late William Hunter, who was a power in matters social, being a Poor-Law Guardian for the Second Division for years, and of Mrs. Edward Fullerton, of Drumaheagles. Her

mother was a sister of the late William Hopkins, whose memory is still fragrant in Ballymoney. Therefore she was the cousin of all the Jordans, with each of whom she was on the most intimate terms of friendship, though she disagreed with them and with her brother in theological doctrines. A disagreement on matters of this kind usually divides friends permanently—not so in this case. She was very conscientious, decided in her opinions (which she could defend satisfactorily at least to herself), clear-brained, devoted to her friends and her Church, devout in spirit, and with a great power of will, which is a strong element in outstanding character. This power of will she manifested in life, as when she was over 50 in age she undertook to run a temperance hotel when temperance principles were not in the ascendant. She made it a comparative success, gaining a competence for the last miles of the road of life, and attracting many loyal friends to herself. Her last days showed the same power of will. Eight days before the end she got up during the night and fell on the floor, badly damaging her limb power. It may have been an incipient stroke of paralysis. Somehow she managed to "hirsle" herself into bed. Her strong will upbore her. But in that hour were developed the seeds of pneumonia, which carried her off in a few days. Her remains were interred on Saturday, 19th February, in the Old Graveyard, the Rev. Felix Holt conducting the service at the grave. She was the lifelong friend of the late Rev. David Watts and his family, and a royal and loyal helper. She gained, because she deserved, the respect of many. So far as one knows, two nephews and two nieces are the only surviving relatives in this country, though she was connected with many in the district by ties of kinship, as well as by bonds of mutual good will.



BY THE WAY.

IF one would like a bright and genuinely interesting account of the way in which the vast new armies called forth by the war are trained and organ-

ized, he cannot do better than read Mr. Ian Hay's book, "The First Hundred Thousand."

* *

It is a record of personal adventures with a Scotch battalion forming part of Kitchener's Army (K. I.). The incidents are all true, although the names are necessarily fictitious.

* *

We are first of all presented to the raw recruit (most of them miners and shipyard workers) being initiated into the mysteries of drill "All over the drab, dusty, gritty parade-ground, under the warm September sun, squads are being pounded into shape. They have no uniform yet; even their instructors wear bowler hats or cloth caps. Some of the faces under the brims of these hats are none too prosperous. The junior officers are drilling squads too. They are a little shaky in what an actor would call their "patter," and they are inclined to lay stress on the wrong syllables, but they move their squads about somehow."

* *

This unpromising material, however, is soon shaped into a formidable, well-trained body of men, kindling with a sense of *esprit de corps*, and ready and capable to play a great part in the 'big push' of September last, as a result of which they are by no means a hundred thousand, now, alas!

* *

The book abounds with excellent stories, of which the following is typical. The scene is near a blanket sterilizer:—"Those men standing in a queue are carrying their bedding. (Yes, quite so, when blankets are passed from regiment to regiment for months on end, in a camp where opportunities for ablution are not lavish, these little things will happen.)

You put the blankets in at one end of the steriliser, turn the necessary handles, and wait. In due course the blankets emerge, steamed, dried and thoroughly purged. At least, that is the idea. But listen to Privates Ogg and Hogg, in one of their cross-talk duologues:

Ogg (examining his blanket): 'They'r a' there yet; see!'

Hogg (an optimist): 'Aye, but they must have gotten an awfu' fricht!'"

* *

It is not at all infrequent at the present time to find folk abusing God and the churches for the existing terrible state of things. No reform lies that way. If we sincerely wish to see good issue out of the present evil, our wish will be well on the way to realization when we begin seriously to reform ourselves. The churches are weak because those who compose them are weak. Nor can God's will be done except we are willing to be the doers.

* *

I am reminded of what I think is an appropriate story. A little girl was most interested in watching the movements of a coal-heaver delivering bags of coal. After a while she said: "O, mother, the coalman put his foot on a banana skin." "Well, and what did he do then?" asked the mother. "O, he sat down quickly, and began talking about God."

* *

In the same way some folks, as soon as they are in a difficulty, begin talking about God.

* *

Talking of coalmen inevitably reminds one of the present high prices of coal, and brings to my mind an incident which occurred during the great coal strike, when coal was even dearer and very much harder to get. A certain frugal Lancashire man noticed that his stock of coal was diminishing faster than his own consumption seemed to warrant. He suspected a neighbour, and resolved to set a watch. Sure enough, out of the darkness appeared a well-known form, which began to help itself most liberally to the cherished coal. The outraged householder could not contain himself, and called out indignantly: "Hi, what art doin' theer, taaking all th' big loomps?" "Thee art a leear," came the answer, in an aggrieved voice; "'ahm not taaking all th' big loomps, ahm taaking them as they coom!"

VIATOR.

Reports.

A Correction.—In Names and Addresses of Ministers and Secretaries given in last month's issue two or three mistakes occurred, which we would now make good. Rev. James Kennedy, Larne, is the Moderator of the Antrim Presbytery, and Rev. G. V. Crook, of Antrim, is the Clerk of the same Presbytery. Rev. M. S. Dunbar, whose name was given under the Antrim Presbytery, resigned his connection with the Presbytery at the end of the year 1915.

* *

Unity Guild.—The Committee requires no justification for deciding, when the arrangements were nearing their final stage, that the concert on 15th March would be altogether too good to be given free. Nothing but a programme of real value could have been produced by the talent which had been promised. So tickets were issued, and it was decided to devote the proceeds to the Belgian Hospital Fund. About an hour before the concert began it set in for a wet night, but, in spite of this, the audience was larger than at any previous meeting this year. Though some of those who had consented to help did not appear, a programme of great excellence was provided, and the audience showed its appreciation by the rounds of applause with which the items were greeted. Mr. Fred Clarke had accepted a professional engagement elsewhere, but his place was admirably filled by Miss Hembry, at the very shortest notice. The Guild owes a real debt of gratitude to all who so generously contributed to the success of the evening. This meeting brought to a close a very happy session. It now only remains to review our past activities at the Annual Meeting on 19th April. We are to be helped in this by Miss I. Campbell, B.A., who has kindly consented to read a paper dealing with the work of the Guild since its foundation.

* *

Belfast: First Congregation.—The Annual Meeting was held on 23rd

February, and the Report showed that, in addition to £170 collected for the ordinary charities like the Domestic Mission, Royal Victoria Hospital, etc., about £450 has been raised during the past winter for St. Dunstan's Hostel. Besides this, over £30 has been forwarded to the Red Cross Society, and more than 700 woollen and other articles have been made by the ladies and sent for the use of the troops. The ladies have decided to go on with their good work through the summer, but the other war work will be discontinued.

That there is no flagging in interest in the work for St. Dunstan's Hostel is evidenced by the fact that another £100 was raised in connection with the final effort of the season on their behalf. It took the form of a Cake Sale, and business must have been very brisk from the time it was opened by the Lady Mayoress, for by 6 p.m. there was not a cake left on any of the stalls. This was most satisfactory so far as the Sale was concerned, but those who came in later with money to spend were no doubt disappointed. However, two excellent concerts were provided during the evening, both of which gave great pleasure.

* *

Belfast : York Street.—A very enjoyable "Musical Evening" was held in the Lecture Hall, on Tuesday evening, February 8th, in aid of the fund to provide comforts for our soldiers and sailors. The modest admission charge of threepence brought the entertainment well within the reach of everyone and was largely responsible for its numerical success, the hall being well filled. The programme, which was of a most interesting and miscellaneous character, consisted of songs and recitations, instrumental trios and choruses by the Choir. The following contributed:—Misses M. Molyneaux, M. Hanna, S. Allen, and W. Anderson, Messrs. B. J. and L. M'Ilveen, J. Hardie, F. Dogherty, and D. Ervine. Everyone of the artistes had to respond to the encores and applause of the audience. Miss Shanks, the temporary Organist of the Church in the place of Mr. Ivan M'Crum, who is at present serving his

King and Country, acted as accompanist for the evening. The programme, which lasted upwards of two hours, terminated with the singing of the National Anthem. The "Evening" was most successful, and elicited very favourable comments on every side.

On the following Saturday evening a very successful dance, for the purpose of further augmenting the funds, was organised by Miss Shanks and Miss Anderson. The sum realized amounted in all to £5 5s.

The Annual Sunday School Social and Prize Distribution was held in the Schoolroom on Friday, March 3rd. There was a good attendance of scholars and friends. Misses Ervine and M. Neill presided at the tea tables. Prizes were distributed to the successful children, after which an excellent programme was provided.

* *

Dunmurry.—A very enjoyable and successful social meeting has recently been held here. The Court-house was tastefully decorated for the occasion, and there was a good attendance of the members. The Ladies' Committee of the Congregation organized the function, and to them and to the friends who helped in the programme, the best thanks of the Congregation are due. A happy evening ended with "Auld Lang Syne" and the National Anthem.

* *

Larne.—The Annual Business and Social Meeting of this Congregation was held on the evening of 14th ult., in the spacious Schoolroom in the Church grounds. The weather was not too favourable, so that, although the meeting was well attended and pleasant, very few country members were in attendance. After tea, the chair was taken by the minister, who called upon the Secretary, Mr. S. Magill, to submit the General Purposes Committee's Report, and upon the Treasurer, Mr. D. A. Nelson, for his Statement of Accounts for the past year. Both Report and Statement were found very satisfactory, a substantial balance being on hand. Mr. Frank Wright, Superintendent, submitted a very gratifying report with

regard to the Larne Sunday School, which, with Report of General Purposes Committee, Treasurer's Statement and Report of the meeting, were ordered to be printed and distributed among the members of the Congregation. Office-bearers for the year were appointed, and thanks tendered to the outgoing Committees, Organist, Choir, and Sunday School Teachers, Mr. J. W. M'Ninch submitting a special vote of thanks, which was passed with enthusiasm to the Secretary and Treasurer, the Secretary having taken the second chair. A most enjoyable programme of vocal and instrumental music was submitted, in which the following took part, viz. :—Miss Lucy Gault, Miss Netta Austin, Miss Annie and Miss May Campbell, Mr. Holmes and Miss Greenfield officiating as accompanists. A very pleasing feature of the entertainment consisted of solos contributed with taste and refinement by Rev. M. Watkins, of Mountpottinger. Fitting reference was made to the death of Count Balzani, husband of the last of the Agnew family, and a liberal supporter of the Congregation. At the close, Rev. J. Kennedy moved, and the audience cordially endorsed, a vote of thanks to the ladies who had provided and dispensed the tea, etc., which were proclaimed excellent; to the ladies and Mr. Watkins for their very delightful vocal contributions; to Mr. David Pinkerton for his gramophone selections, and to Miss Greenfield and Mr. Holmes for accompaniments.

* *

Lecture in Rosemary Hall.—An interesting lecture on the work accomplished by the Belgian Hospital Fund was given in the Rosemary Hall, on Friday evening, the 3rd March, by the Rev. W. H. Drummond, B.A. The lecturer, who is the President of the Fund, has made tours of the various military hospitals and convalescent depots in company with other officials, and he described what has been done through the Fund to alleviate the suffering and brighten the lives of the Belgian wounded soldiers. The Rev. D. Purves, D.D., presided over the meeting. At the outset, Mr. Drummond dealt with

the conditions of the Belgian military hospitals in the early days of the war, and the efforts made to mitigate the sufferings of the wounded. After the retreat of the Belgian Army, he said, there was practically no hospital accommodation left for the wounded men, and it was a terrible problem that had to be faced. The Belgians were at that time short of an amazing number of things we considered necessary for the comfort of our own men. The lecturer proceeded to give an interesting account of his personal visits to the hospitals of the Belgian Army, and said they had realised something of the sorrow, suffering, and loneliness the Belgian soldiers had borne for the common cause. It made them feel that anything they did could never be too much to relieve the heartache and suffering of the Belgian soldiers. They had always tried to make their work a real ministry of friendship, and the bond of sympathy that had been created would last after the war. They had made themselves acquainted with the conditions of the hospital, and had tried to take the place of the local committees interested in British military hospitals. They had been able to supply the doctors with many things that had been an immense boon to them in their work. The Belgian soldier was an exile without a home, and convalescent depots had been established in the villages of France for the men discharged from hospital. The very elements of comfort were lacking in some of these depots, and in some cases they had been instrumental in changing the whole aspect of the places. Gloom and disappointment had given place to cheerfulness and courage. They had proved the immense value of personal contact and supervision. Nothing could be more untrue than the impression that the Belgian soldiers were waiting for them to shower gifts upon them. The soldiers were extraordinarily grateful—and not a little surprised—for what had been done for them, but at the same time they were doing a great deal to help themselves. They were facing the problem of their incapacitated men with remarkable thorough-

ness and foresight. In the words of a prominent Belgian, the men were not going back to their country to be a nation of beggars. Was it not worth helping people who were helping themselves? He paid a warm tribute of praise to the splendid work carried on by the Belgian officers and doctors, and said the medical men were heroes in the highest and truest sense of the word. The collection was in aid of the Fund, and the meeting concluded with votes of thanks.

* *

Orphan Society.—As our local treasurers and collectors are aware the returns of the annual subscriptions are expected by 31st March. The Secretary would be obliged and greatly assisted if all lists, alphabetically arranged, could be sent to him, and the subscriptions to Mr A. K. Stewart, 49 Donegall Place, Belfast, as near to 31st March as possible.

BIRTH.

PICKERING—9th March, at Airlie, Marlborough Park S Belfast, to Rev. and Mrs. E. H. Pickering—a son.

BAPTISM.

M'COLL—William, son of William and Jane M'Coll. Born February 19th, and baptized at 97 Mountcollyer Road on March 6th, 1916.

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